

"They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer."

Acts 2:42

I can't believe that Lent is just around the corner. It has been quite the new year so far. In just 6 short weeks we will be celebrating Easter beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 5th to begin the Lenten season. I have always loved the seasons of Lent and Easter because of the simplicity and purity about it them that I find refreshing. I guess that is appropriate since the origin of the word "Lent" comes from the German Lenzin meaning springtime.

Historically, the church has used the season of Lent to remember and imitate the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting and praying. Likewise, the church has used this time to encourage believers to use this time for penance or denial of self through the practices of prayer, fasting and giving. I like to think of Lent as a time to slow down, reflect and refresh; a time to revisit or add a new spiritual practice of listening deeply for the voice of God; to refocus my mind on the things that are truly important.

Richard Foster in his book Celebration of Discipline-The Path to Spiritual Growth, says that "The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people. The classical disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths."

In the social and cultural context of extremes that we find ourselves in these days, there is a need more than ever to navigate the polarities in our lives and to find peace in the midst. To that end, this Lent we will be looking at Jesus' ministry and his interactions with the people he encounters, in the Sermon Series, Everything in Between: Meeting God in the Midst of Extremes. In keeping with that theme, there will also be a Daily Devotional for you use either online or in hard copy form if you prefer. As you seek to go deeper with God, I invite you to come along, go deep and observe a Holy Lent.

Pastor Claire

GOING ON AROUND NORTHKIRK



Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the start of the season in the church year known as Lent.

Lent is a time to prepare for the celebration of Easter and to renew our life in the mystery of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. During this time, we use symbols and rituals that have a rich history which are rooted in Jewish tradition and the early church. For that reason, we symbolize the season of Lent with purple, ashes, palms, communion, and the cross. Our special worship services on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday, lead us on a journey to the cross and ultimately to the empty tomb and the great resurrection celebration of Easter.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, a biblical symbol of mourning and penitence. This ancient sign speaks of the fragility of human life and marks the sorrow and regret of the community of faith where we remember our wrongs before God and our human mortality. The service focuses on both themes, helping us to realize that both have been overcome through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. During the Ash Wednesday service, the pastor lightly marks the sign of the cross with ashes onto the foreheads of



worshipers. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship. Historically, ashes signified purification and sorrow for sins. This year Ash Wednesday will be March 5th at 6:00 pm with communion and the imposition of ashes. We hope you will join us for this meaningful service as we begin the season of Lent with the sign of ashes and meet together at the Lord's Table.

SENIOR TAX MOMENTS



So here we are in 2025 and we have survived the January wind storms. Now tax season is upon us and we can start planning for another year. If you were fortunate enough to have a retirement plan where you worked or contributed to an Individual Retirement Plan (IRA) you could have moved some taxable income away for later. At seventy- and one-half years of age (now 73) the government wanted us to take some of that sheltered money out of the IRA. You may have also rolled over your retirement plans into an IRA, so that counts too. The required minimum distribution (RMD) is determined each year based on the amount left in each account. The good news is that you may not have to pay taxes on that money.

The IRA's have a provision for a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to be made directly from the IRA. First the Charity must qualify. Northkirk does. Next you must be in the "Golden Years". The amount cannot exceed your RMD or \$105,000 per person (whichever is less). The payment must be made directly to the Charity (Church). A direct transfer or a paper check is fine. In fact, the IRA can make the check out to the Church and mail it to you so you can place it in the offering on Sunday. If you wish you can designate the money to a special gift like Christmas giving. Distribution must be made before the end of the year to satisfy the RMD.

There are some additional benefits for the QCD. Your adjusted gross income will be less overall and taxable Social Security may be lower, your Medicare Premiums could reduce, your medical itemized deductions could have a smaller adjustment, and you may be in a lower tax bracket for capital gains. Of course, you can't deduct the donation since the income won't be there.

One last thing, when you get your tax form from the IRA you may need to adjust the taxable amount to reflect the QCD. I will be glad to show you how.

My minute is up so any questions, see me.

Thanks,

Steve Hanson



DEACON'S CORNER



"It's easy to race through our days, weeks, or seasons, intent on tasks, obligations, and chores, so focused on accomplishing our to-do lists that we forgo little pleasures, believing either that they are a waste of energy or that we don't deserve them. Searching out beauty on ordinary days is an act of worship when we pause to acknowledge and appreciate God's handiwork. It can bring our thoughts back to God and help us recognize his sovereignty and his creative genius."

-Acts of Gratitude for Ordinary Days by Julie Fisk



My challenge to you is to seek out God's handiwork during your day-to-day routine. Take a moment to laugh with the grandkids, sip your morning coffee in the garden's stillness, or notice the sunlight through the clouds after it rains. Remember, God blesses us each day. So go ahead and smell the flowers and put out the pretty placemats remembering that God made them all. Breathe in those blessings with a moment of worshipful gratitude. Share some thoughts of gratitude with a friend and keep the blessing going.

-Sue Sharra

FAITH FELLOWSHIP FITNESS FOOD

Classic Beef Stew



- 2 tbsp All-purpose Flour
- 1 tbsp Italian Seasoning
- 3 tbsp Olive Oil
- 2 lb Top Round
- 1.5 lb Mushrooms, quartered
- 4 cup Low Sodium Chicken Broth
- 1 Large Onion, chopped
- 3 Cloves Minced Garlic
- 2 Large Russet Potatoes
- 3 Medium Peeled Carrots
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 tbsp Fresh Thyme, minced
- 1tbsp Red Wine Vinegar
- 1/2 tsp Freshly Ground Black Pepper

Directions

- 1. Combine the all-purpose flour with the Italian seasoning. Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Dredge the beef cubes lightly in the flour mixture and add the beef, in batches to keep the beef in one layer, until well browned on each side.
- 2. Remove the beef from the pan and deglaze the pan with 1/4 cup chicken broth. Add in the mushrooms and sauté for about 4 minutes until well browned. Remove the mushrooms from the pan and deglaze with another 1/4 cup of the broth. Add the onions and garlic and sauté for 4 minutes. Return the beef to the pot, add the remaining chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Partially cover, lower the heat to simmer, and cook for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3. Peel and cut the potatoes into 3/4-inch pieces. Cut the carrots into 1/2-inch pieces. Add the potatoes and carrots to the stew and continue to cook for another 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add in the reserved mushrooms, peas, and thyme. Season with red wine vinegar and black pepper.

Nutrition Facts

Per 1 cup serving: 250 calories, 7g fat, 45mg cholesterol, 24g carbohydrate, 25g protein. Source: www.diabetesfoodhub.org

FAITH FELLOWSHIP FITNESS FOOD

Forty-Forty: 40 Days, 40 Miles

Believe it or not, Lent starts March 5th on Ash Wednesday! Many people begin thinking about what to fast from during lent. A small group here at Northkirk just finished up The 40 Day Sugar Fast with Wendy Speake and some are thinking of repeating it. Another group at Northkirk has discovered the Forty Forty challenge which means walking a mile a day for the forty days of lent and reading through the book of John.

The Forty Forty Challenge is an online support group. The website says-"follow along with scripture and daily optional challenges. Then take time each day to move and push your body, just one mile a day."

How it works: Go to Forty Forty Challenge on Facebook or Instagram, or Google "Forty Challenge". There is a fee to join the accountability group. Walk or run a mile a day. You will be reading and studying the book of John each day. Stay accountable with the

online support group. This is one idea of how to participate in Lent.

Please see Dean Collins, Thelma Campbell or Nancy Michalski for more information.
-Teri Smits



FAITH FELLOWSHIP FITNESS FOOD

Creation Care

"Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you, or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."

(Job 12:7-10, NIV)

Spring is right around the corner, and I'm already anticipating the longer days of sunlight and warmth, with a joyful welcome. Nature is hinting at change, with trees beginning to cover bare branches with tiny leaf buds. Surprises met me on a recent hike, with a small herd of deer, munching their way through a grassy field. Coming home, I noticed the hanging jasmine that climbs up our juniper trees, has quietly produced pink stems for the soon-to-appear fragrant blossoms. Sometimes, I'm not sure if we realize the gift that each day brings to us. No sunrise or sunset has ever been repeated; even after all these millions and billions of years, there still are always new ones to behold, every single day. . .

I guess that's why I wonder, why have we given up the role of caretaker, which was the first original request from God? Why have we seemingly become complacent with throwing aside our trash, on city streets and parking lots; in green spaces, such as parks or trails to hike and explore? Especially disheartening is to see the beauty of the mountainous rocks and canyons disgraced with graffiti. What mindset influences us to show so little care?

FAITH FELLOWSHIP FITNESS FOOD

Creation Care (Continued)

Perhaps, it is due to being a consumer people. The farther we have moved away from the source of our foods and things we surround ourselves with, the easier it is to disregard the very earth and environment that supports our existence. Yet, to participate in the care of our land can bring joy and actually be a boost for our mental health and well-being. Gardening is a great way to involve ourselves in nature.

Studies have shown that gardening relieves people from attention fatigue, it's a wonderful break from social media! Working with soil, smelling the plants and dirt, feeling different textures, seeing all the green foliage and colorful blossoms helps to relax our mind and experience reduced stress, anxiety, and even pent-up anger. This is because the exercise from gardening releases dopamine, the feel-good hormone, which actually boosts our memory as well as enabling us to feel happier and less despondent.

Another indirect benefit is that we start eating healthier. If you grow your vegetables or fruits, you will eat them at their freshest points when the produce is rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Plus, when you garden organically, you get less preservatives and pesticide exposure. Know that you can always start small. Just pick your packet of seeds, get a couple of pots of dirt, put them in a sunny spot, then watch and wait for the seedlings to start. Even starting a small herb garden with mint, basil, or rosemary, will bring wonderful aromas into your kitchen as well as enhancing your salads, soups and full meals. Know that as you do this, you become less of a consumer and more of a caretaker, ultimately fulfilling one of God's desires for us, to care for his creation and world. . .

-Mary S. Brown

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

BY CLERK OF SESSION: DANIEL BEAUVAIS

The elders discussed the upcoming Congregational Meeting and the presentation of Annual REPORTS. Session then discussed the approval of a childcare worker to staff the nursery on Sunday mornings. This will require Northkirk to still staff one volunteer per Sunday. From Stewardship, Session approved Laura Stephenson to help our Treasurer, Emily, reconcile the monthly statements. Thank you, Laura, for your help. Session also approved the updated contract for one of our tenants, R4C.

Northkirk will be voting on two changes to the bylaws at the annual Congregational meeting on March 2nd. All bylaw changes MUST be approved by the congregation. The purpose of these changes are 1) To allow Session to discuss and vote on noncontroversial items via email and 2) elect the Treasurer per the book of order. Both of these changes are fairly straightforward. If anyone would like more information and the text of the changes, please contact Daniel Beauvais.

Average Attendance for Online & In-Person Worship Services For February: Facebook live: 3 viewers YouTube live: 3 viewers In-Person: 70 attendees YouTube Like us on facebook

Saint Patrick's Facts

- He was born in Britain in the late 4th century, named Maewyn Succat
- At 16 years old, he was taken from his home and spent six years as a slave in Ireland before fleeing and reuniting with his family
- He became a Christian and was ordained as a bishop while in England
- He returned to Ireland as a missionary
- St. Patrick's Day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland
- Saint Patrick is the patron saint and national apostle of Ireland
- According to legend, he used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity



Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report as of January 31, 2025 Emily Scholz, Church Treasurer



| Operational Budget | January | January | Year to Date | Year to Date | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| | Budget | Actual | Budget | Actual | |
| Giving/Receipts | 18,768.00 | 13,579.60 | 18,768.00 | 13,579.60 | |
| Expenses | 22,323.60 | 35,445.93 | 22,323.60 | 35,445.93 | |
| Net Operating Surplus/Deficit | -3,555.60 | -21,866.33 | -3,555.60 | -21,866.33 | |

The net operating deficit is subsidized by saving reserves and investment funds. The session has budgeted a total of \$67,373.10 to be withdrawn from our investments this year. Stewardship/Finance has set a goal of \$55,000 and approved by session to withdraw this year. We have withdrawn \$0 so far this year.

Many thanks to all who supported the Christmas Gift to Northkirk. The money collected was over \$12,000 and will be used to fix our patio roof and to paint the outside of our classrooms to match our beautiful sanctuary.

Our January income is lower than usual, most likely a result of Christmas spending. Our January actual expenses are high because three paydays fell in January. Our pay periods are every two weeks so a few times per year we get hit with three paydays in one month.

Each of our members has a tithe to the Presbytery to pay for Per Capita. The 2025 fee is \$45.00 per member. We appreciate the members who pay a little extra to Per Capita for those that cannot pay the tithe.

If anyone has questions or comments regarding our budget, loan balances, bank balances or investments, please contact the church office at 909-989-4919 and your questions will be forwarded to our church treasurer or to someone on the stewardship/finance team.

-Emily Scholz

Northkirk Elders Area of Responsibility

Dan Beauvais – Clerk Of Session
Nona Cabral – Christian Education
Steven Hanson – Facilities and Grounds
Jo Simmons – Membership and Fellowship
Tom Stahl – Missions and Evangelism
Thelma Campbell – Music, Worship and Arts
Alan Simmons – Stewardship and Finance
Chris Maitlen – Northkirk Community
Coordinator
Joyce Brand – Personnel



Electronic Giving Accounts

events@northkirk.org
mops@northkirk.org
giving@northkirk.org
theatre@northkirk.org
loveoffering@northkirk.org
These may be used with Zelle. Currently
mops@northkirk.org can be used with Venmo,
the other accounts cannot.



EASTER EGGS NEEDED

WE NEED PREFILLED EASTER EGGS
FOR OUR EGG HUNT ON APRIL 12!
PLEASE BRING THEM BY THE OFFICE OR
LEAVE THEM IN THE SANCTUARY BY
APRIL 9

Thank You!

MOMCO OF NORTHKIRK "A MOM COMMUNITY"



MomCo of Northkirk met twice in February, both filled with friendship and joy. The February 5th meeting featured mentor mom, Teri Smits, who presented "Kindergarten Readiness", using knowledge from her years of elementary school teaching. Topics included: reading to your children daily, family-time, spending time outside together, providing opportunities to your children to play with others <u>and</u> alone, playing music

and stories during car rides, teaching your children how to entertain themselves, and teaching your children how to choose healthy snacks. Our February 19th meeting was one our moms look forward to each year, titled "Mom Hacks". Great tips, clever ideas, time-saving skills and tricks-of-the-trade were shared. So much great advice was passed around. By now, our MomCo moms have been together for six months and enjoy the supportive, friendly environment.

"MomCo Swap" has been extremely successful this year. "MomCo Swap" is where our moms can bring items they don't need any more such as gently-used clothes, toys, books, bottle-warmers, and even strollers! The items are spread out on the back pew before each meeting. If there is an item available that a mom needs, she is welcome to take from the items that have been laid out.



The MomCo "Adventure Days" continue to go strong. On February 3rd, our moms went for a gorgeous hike on the Etiwanda Falls Trail.

Despite minor complaining from the younger children, everyone made it to the top of the trail and saw the beautiful waterfall! On February 12th, we visited the Orange County Petting Zoo.

MomCo would like to continue to thank Northkirk for their support. We will meet every first and third Wednesday at 9:00am in Baird Hall until May.

-Nancy Kwedar (mentor mom)

MARCH EVENT CALENDAR

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|------------------------|---|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| 23 Worship Service 9:30 am | 24 | Prayer Part. 9 am Session Mtg. 6:30 pm | 26 Bible Study 7:30 am Pastor's Office | Caring Crafters 2 pm Handbells 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Praise Band 7:30 pm | 28 Youth Group 7:30 pm | MAT Mtg. 10 am Writer's Group Via Zoom 11:30 am |
| Worship Service 9:30 am 3D Study 11 am | 3 | 4 Prayer Part. 9 am MAT Mtg. 6 pm | 5 Ash Wednesday Service 6 pm | 6 Handbells 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Praise Band 7:30 pm | 7 Youth Group 7:30 pm | 8 Campus Work Day 8:00 am |
| 9 Worship Service 9:30 am 3D Study 11 am | 10 | Prayer Part. 9 am Deacons Mtg. 6:30 pm | 12 Bible Study 7:30 am Pastor's Office | Caring Crafters 2 pm Handbells 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Praise Band 7:30 pm | 14 Youth Group 7:30 pm | 15 Writer's Group Via Zoom 11:30 am |
| 16 Worship Service 9:30 am 3D Study 11 am | St. Patrick's* *Day* | 18 Prayer Part. 9 am Session Mtg. 6:45 pm | 19 Bible Study 7:30 am Pastor's Office MomCo 9 am | 20 Handbells 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Praise Band 7:30 pm | 21 Youth Group 7:30 pm | 22 |
| 23 Worship Service 9:30 am 3D Study 11 am | 24 | 25 Prayer Part. 9 am | 26 Bible Study 7:30 am Pastor's Office | Caring Crafters 2 pm Handbells 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Praise Band 7:30 pm | 28 Youth Group 7:30 pm | Spring Boutique 9 am - 2 pm Blood Drive 9 am - 2 pm |
| | 31 Tuesday, 9 am, Mar | | 2 Bible Study 7:30 am Coco's MomCo 9 am Happy B | Handbells 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm Praise Band 7:30 pm | 4 Youth Group 7:30 pm | 5 Campus Work Day 8:00 am |

Call Mary Lee with prayer requests or to be part of the group.

<u>Bible Study at 7:30 am</u> Pastor's Office, Contact Terry Switzer. First Wednesday of the month meets at CoCo's on Baseline and Haven.

3D Study - Sunday, 11 am contact Claire Schlegel 909-240-8049

| Ruth Lee | 3/07 |
|-----------------|------|
| Tom Allbaugh | 3/12 |
| Tom Emick | 3/14 |
| Thelma Campbell | 3/18 |
| Kim Wallace | 3/22 |

Happy Anniversary!

| Dean & Dawn Collins | 3/03 |
|---------------------|------|
| Tom & Paula Emick | 3/21 |
| Sue & Guy Sharra | 3/30 |